Kelly Cook

Royal Wedding

On April 29, Prince William and his long time girlfriend, Catherine “Kate” Middleton, were married at Westminster Abbey in front of nearly 2,000 guests.

Those invited included world leaders, members of the royal family, and friends of both the bride and groom. Approximately one million people crowded the streets of London to witness the event and another two billion viewed the wedding on television.

On the night before the wedding, Kate stayed with her family at the Goring Hotel in London, while William stayed at Clarence House with his father, Prince Charles, and brother, Harry. Camera crews surrounded both residences as the world awaited the next morning.

The day went off without a hitch, beginning at exactly 11 a.m. as Kate Middleton emerged from her car in front of Westminster Abbey.

Unlike previous royal brides who arrived in stately royal carriages, Kate chose to arrive in a car and later leave in a carriage to represent her transition from a commoner to a princess.

The much-anticipated wedding dress had been kept a secret for months, and speculation arose on whether Kate would choose a more modern or traditional style.

The dress, designed by Sarah Burton at Alexander McQueen, turned out to be the perfect blend of both modern and traditional styles and was well received by many. The gown had a structured and flattering bodice, floral, laced sleeves, and a train that stretched nearly nine feet.

The dress also included embroidery around the skirt and a full lace veil, along with a 1936 Cartier tiara lent by Queen Elizabeth herself. Kate had carefully thought out the design of the dress with Sarah Burton and it was her goal to combine tradition, modernity, and her own personal style into the perfect gown.

Prince William wore a scarlet red Irish Guard uniform, polished and arranged to perfection.

As Kate and her father walked down the lengthy aisle of Westminster Abbey, the anxiety and happiness was evident on their faces. The aisle had been lined with trees, a request from Kate, to give the church a more intimate feel.

As Kate reached the altar, William leaned over and whispered, “You look absolutely beautiful,” tugging on the heartstrings of viewers everywhere. Sophomore Rachel Brinson said this moment was one of her favorite parts of the whole day.

“Kate looked absolutely stunning in her dress, and the church was decorated so beautifully. When she finally got to the altar and Will whispered that to her, I just started crying. It was perfect” Brinson said.

The ceremony lasted about an hour, and included vows from William and Kate, a reading from Kate’s brother, James, and many beautiful songs performed by the Westminster Abbey Boys’ Choir, chosen by the couple themselves.

As William and Catherine emerged from the abbey following the ceremony, the sun seemed to shine through the clouds at the same moment. The forecast for the day of the wedding had been dark and rainy; causing many spectators to believe that the sudden sunshine and beautiful weather that followed was the doing of William’s late mother, Princess Diana.

William and his new bride then rode to Buckingham palace in a carriage, followed by their families and the best man, Harry, and maid of honor, Pippa Middleton. The streets were lined with people waving British flags and cheering for the new couple.

As William and Catherine entered the palace to take pictures and rest for a short time, crowds of nearly one million people surged to the front gates of Buckingham palace, waiting for the moment when the couple would appear on the balcony.

About 5,000 police officers were deployed for the event, and had their hands full with the enormous crowds that consistently pushed to get closer to the palace gates.

Finally, the future king and queen of England emerged from the palace and stepped onto the balcony. The people erupted into deafening cheers, putting broad smiles on the faces of the new couple. The newlyweds continued to wave and take in the moment until the crowd began chanting, asking for them to kiss.

William and Catherine shared not one, but two kisses on the balcony, pleasing the crowds both in England and around the world. The Royal Air Force then performed the ceremonial flyby with seven WWII planes from the Battle of Britain, the perfect ending to a fairytale day.

The couple received their first wedding gift from the Queen, who gave them the new titles: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

With their marriage, William and Catherine have successfully continued royal tradition at a time when many citizens in England question the purpose of the monarchy. Events such as the wedding, however, draw attention to the country, encouraging tourism and providing the country with a living history to take pride in.